

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 9, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable Ur Jaddou
Director
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
5900 Capital Gateway Drive
Camp Springs, MD 20746

Dear President Biden, Secretary Mayorkas, and Director Jaddou:

We write today to urge the administration to expeditiously utilize its statutory authority to redesignate, for Temporary Protected Status (TPS), Venezuelan nationals who have been continuously residing or physically present in the United States since May 2023.

Venezuela is currently in the midst of an unprecedented social, economic, and humanitarian collapse that has resulted in over 7 million Venezuelans fleeing the country since 2015.¹ In turn, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has categorized the situation in Venezuela as the “largest external displacement crisis in the world,” second only to Ukraine.² These immigrant families have continually fled escalating violence, economic insecurity, malnutrition, and absences of medicine and essential services in Venezuela,³ brought about by what economists from Harvard University and the International Monetary Fund have described as the “single largest economic collapse outside of the war in [over 40] years.”⁴ In reflection of this, the New York Times has documented how “tens of thousands” of Venezuelan migrants—often families with children—have crossed rivers, scaled mountains, and traversed the Darien Gap in hopes of reaching safety in the U.S.⁵ In light of this ongoing situation, it is our view that the U.S. should treat these Venezuelan migrants with the utmost compassion, dignity, and respect.

¹ Vanessa Buschschlüter, *Venezuela crisis: 7.1m leave country since 2015*, BBC News (Oct. 17, 2022), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-63279800>.

² *Venezuela Situation*, UNHCR (last updated March 2023), <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/venezuela-emergency.html>.

³ Julie Turkewitz, *In Record Numbers, Venezuelans Risk a Deadly Trek to Reach the U.S. Border*, N.Y. Times (Oct. 7, 2022), <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/07/world/americas/venezuelan-migrants-us-border.html>.

⁴ Anatoly Kurmanaev, *Venezuela's Collapse Is the Worst Outside of War in Decades, Economists Say*, N.Y. Times (May 17, 2019), <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/17/world/americas/venezuela-economy.html>.

⁵ Turkewitz, *supra* note 3.

Congress has provided the Secretary of Homeland Security with the statutory authority to designate or redesignate a foreign state for TPS.⁶ Currently, immigrants from sixteen countries, including Venezuela, have been designated for TPS by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), subject to various parameters.⁷ However, under Venezuela's present TPS designation, Venezuelan immigrants who arrived in the U.S. after March 8, 2021, remain ineligible to apply for or receive TPS in the U.S.—even if they meet all other TPS eligibility criteria.

Although TPS is only available for Venezuelans who have maintained a continuous physical residence in the U.S. since before March 9, 2021, the conditions that led to the previous designation of Venezuela for TPS have continued to worsen. The ongoing humanitarian crisis in Venezuela warrants a favorable exercise of discretion for the redesignation of Venezuela for TPS. Therefore, we strongly encourage the administration to redesignate Venezuelans for TPS status by extending TPS eligibility to all Venezuelan nationals who have been in the U.S. since May 2023. We urge you to protect displaced Venezuelans currently residing in the U.S., and we look forward to your prompt response on this matter.

Sincerely,



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
Member of Congress

⁶ See 8 U.S.C. 1254a(b)(1).

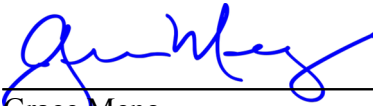
⁷ *Temporary Protected Status Designated Country: Venezuela*, USCIS (last updated March 30, 2023), <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status/temporary-protected-status-designated-country-venezuela>.



Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



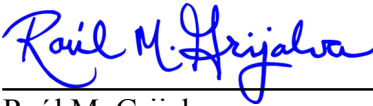
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



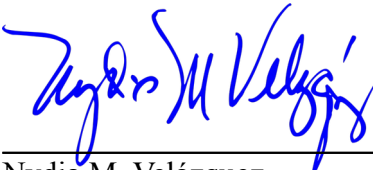
Greg Casar
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Raúl M. Grijalva
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Rashida Tlaib
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Nydia M. Velázquez
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